

"COME, BROTHERS, AROUSE!"

A MASS MEETING

Of the citizens and tax-payers of Otoe County will be held at the Court House at Nebraska City,

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1870, AT 12 O'CLOCK NOON,

For the purpose of considering the present condition of our county affairs and of nominating a full

People's Reform Ticket

For all County offices, to be filled in the October Election, 1870.

COME ONE, COME ALL!

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF OTOE COUNTY.—In compliance with a duty devolved upon us by a meeting of citizens, we earnestly ask your attention to a few facts, concerning our State and county affairs, which in our opinion, require to be remedied quickly, or the burdens of taxation will bankrupt the people. A few years more of reckless prodigality, and our once prosperous cities will be a mass of vacant houses—our beautiful farms deserted—as in 1807 and 1860. We ask you, farmers, merchants and business men, to carefully examine the facts we offer for your consideration.

When we were solicited to change our Territorial to a State Government we were assured by prominent politicians backed by the express provisions of the Constitution, that our State Government would not cost more than \$20,000. Yet we find the appropriations made at the last regular session of the Legislature, amount to the sum of \$69,622. We ask you tax-payers, to look at the items as found on pages 141 and 142 of the session of 1869; and say, if there are not many officers and expenses, not contemplated by the Constitution, or warranted by the exigencies of the public service.

In addition to the appropriations, there are taxes levied; uncollected for the wants of the people. We earnestly protest against the collection of such taxes as that for the "University" years before it is known who will receive them, and you will find that you are paying one-third more for University tax than for Common Schools. Is there any justice or propriety in wringing money from the toiling masses to amass a fund to educate the shiftless or pampered few? How many of the sons and daughters of the hard working farmers of this State will be able to avail themselves of the benefits of the University—for better give our means to provide a good Common School in each District, thereby bringing an education within the reach of every child in the State.

We earnestly call your attention to the condition of the laws relating to the Common School funds. Our first legislature provided that the funds arising from the sale of school land, should be invested in United States or State bonds, bearing 6 per cent interest.

The last legislature amended the law, so as to allow a few State officers to invest those funds in United States and State bonds, or other good securities, bearing 6 per cent interest. What guarantee have you that some future Governor may not invest those funds in palatial residences for himself, and friends, or loan to build monster hotels or business houses. If the town site should prove a failure, and the hotel become the resort only of owls and serpents, your children's money is lost. We appeal to the good sense of every man. Would it not be better, does not justice demand, that the School, University, and all other funds, the principal of which cannot be expended, be apportioned among the several counties, in an equitable manner, and loaned upon improved real estate, in limited sums. The amount to which Otoe county would be entitled to, under such apportionment, would greatly relieve many farmers and mechanics who are now suffering from the hard times occasioned by high taxes, and low price of produce.

Were the foregoing all the evils requiring remedy, they would be sufficient to call forth the strongest efforts from every lover of his country and family, for a reformation. But fellow-citizens, by far the worst has yet to be told.

The theory and practice of the American government, has always been that a man was entitled to enjoy, in peace, the quiet possession of the property of which he had become honestly the owner. Upon this as-

sumption our Constitution was formed. But our legislature, led on by what we believe to be reckless speculators and unprincipled adventurers, procured the passage of "An Act to authorize counties, towns and precincts to issue bonds to aid in the construction of railroads, or other so called improvements in the State." The principle upon which this act is based is this: That the non-tax paying classes in our larger cities have the right to vote away the property of the citizen for other than exclusively public uses, the benefits of which every citizen can participate, is, we think, very clear. We hold it to be highly immoral in its tendency, destroying every incentive to a life of industry and frugality, thereby to accommodate a competence for others at the expense of loved ones. Because the masses led on by unprincipled or thoughtless persons, could vote away the hard earnings of others.

It is dangerous, therefore, to ignore the reckless extravagance and disregard of others' rights, found among gamblers and the lowest, vilest portion of mankind. If any unconstitutional iniquity exists it violates that principle which declares that the property of a citizen shall not be taken without just compensation being given for the same.

Contrary to the plainest dictates of justice and political economy, the legislature passed the act in question. We challenge the civilization of the State to a greater, more glaring outrage, a greater disregard of principles which should govern honest men, a greater indifference to villainy, or one which if permitted to remain unrepealed upon our statute book, will work greater wrong or entail greater misery upon the State, ruled by its mischievous precepts.

That we do not misrepresent this sum of all iniquity, we ask your careful consideration of the act as found on page 92 and 93 (session 1869) especially of section 6 and 8 a brief synopsis of which we give. Bonds obtained are made a lien upon all property, notwithstanding any defect in submitting the vote, or in taking the vote, or in the execution of the bonds, or though they may not have been voted upon, executed or issued in conformity of law. Such bonds shall have all the binding force as if they had been according to law.

It matters not what frauds, villainy or illegality, the people are estopped from pleading want of consideration, and the authorities of a county or city may be compelled, by mandamus or otherwise, to levy the tax to pay the same. Such are the inhuman provisions of this act. Under its provisions, thousands of dollars of Otoe county bonds have been obtained, professedly to aid in building a railroad. Why has not the road been built, according to contract, instead of being as it is, only heaps of dirt, in some places, and unsightly cuts in others. Marrying the fair face of our beautiful prairies, rumor, perhaps more than rumor says, that those bonds, instead of being used in the construction of the R. R., were diverted among the Directors as compensation for their services in procuring the bonds—some gentlemen getting \$10,000—others only \$2,000. In this manner the tax-payers and honest portion of the community are made hewers of wood and drawers of water for the unprincipled few. Want of space forbids further comment on this subject.

We feel it our duty to call your attention to our county affairs. Under the influence and in conformity with the vicious principles and practice, growing out of our State Government our county has made alarming progress in expenses. We desire to call your attention to the fact that in 1863 the levy for county purposes including \$12,777 for jail was \$26,000; in 1869 the levy is \$105,812.00. The Commissioners remitted one-third of sinking fund—leaving the net-

levy for county purposes, \$74,872.00, showing the alarming increase of \$51,872.00 in four years. We are told the levy for 1870 will further increase the burden of taxation. At this rapid rate of increase in your county and State expenses—how long, brothers of Otoe, can you support your families and pay your taxes. How long business men, can you pay those taxes, and compete with merchants of more congenital localities. We ask you property-holders to ponder this subject and say whether your tenants can pay rent sufficient to make your property a profitable investment. We call upon each and all of every party and profession to aid us in rolling back this tide of extravagance and corruption e'er it involves us in moral and financial ruin. Want of space forbids us entering into the particulars of many more wrongs.

Such are the reassessment of property in Otoe county, contrary to law. The diverting of funds belonging to one fund for the payment of other claims.

The unequal distribution of road funds.

The enormous amount collected for Court House, (and yet there is a large amount of Court House bonds unpaid), &c., &c.

We deem the foregoing sufficient to show you the necessity of a reform.

Therefore we earnestly call upon all men of every party and profession to lay aside the trammels of party and unite with us in selecting a ticket of good and true men, who will pledge themselves to the following measures:

The repeal of all laws authorizing the voting of bonds to R. R. or other private enterprises.

The distribution of the school and other permanent funds among the res. counties to be loaned upon improved real estate within the county.

The repeal of University or other tax being collected in advance of the time when the same is needed.

That the school fund collected in each county be retained within the same, and disbursed for the benefit of that county.

It is asking too much of the tax payers in the river counties that they should help to educate the children of the homesteaders, when the Government gives them their house for nothing and exempts them besides, from all other taxes for the period of full eight years.

The abolishing of all taxes, not specially provided for by the Constitution, or absolutely demanded by the service of the State.

The careful scrutiny of every appropriation, whether State or County, and reducing the expenditures within the strictest economy.

Farmers, Mechanics, Business Men and Taxpayers of Otoe county in general!

Let us all take hold of our county affairs, not a few of us, but the great mass with a fixed resolve to deserve success and achieve it! We must and we will reach the heart of the people, arouse their enthusiasm, and cause them to rush to the polls like an avalanche.

Men and brethren! Let us be on hand on Saturday next. Let us deliberate calmly and harmoniously.

Don't try to win the politicians and chronic grabbers for "office," the day will gather when they find out where the sugar lies.

Nebraska City, September, 1870.
By order of the People's Reform League,

H. C. WOLFS.
RICHARD JUSTICE.
ROBERT HAWKES.
THOMAS HANLON.
FREDERICK BETTS.
C. H. COVLES.
J. E. DOOM.
JOHN McCARTHY.
M. B. DAVIS.
JAMES R. KESTERSON.
HENRY PENNELL.
DAVID STRACK.
J. P. MUMFORD.



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MASS MEETING

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 11 1830 AT 12 O'CLOCK NOON

People's Meeting

COME ONE COME ALL

For Boston will speak at 12 o'clock
on and Friday, they are so much
said last Sunday night among